# The Washington Times

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The Washington Times is a daily broadsheet published at 3600 New York Avenue NE, Washington, D.C., United States. It was founded in 1982 by the founder of the Unification Church, Sun Myung Moon and was owned by News World Communications, an international media conglomerate associated with the church, until 2010 when it was purchased directly by a group led by Moon.

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## History

The Washington Times was founded in 1982 by News World Communications, an international media conglomerate associated with the Unification Church which also owns newspapers in South Korea, Japan, and South America, as well as the news agency United Press International.<sup>[1]</sup> Bo Hi Pak, the chief aide of church founder and leader Sun Myung Moon, was the founding president and the founding chairman of the board.<sup>[2]</sup> Moon asked Richard L. Rubenstein, a rabbi and college professor who had written on the Holocaust, to serve on the board of directors.<sup>[3]</sup>

### The Washington Times



**Type** Daily newspaper

Format Broadsheet

Owner(s) News World Media Development,

LLC

**Editor** Ed Kelley

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At the time of founding of the *Times* Washington had only one major newspaper, the *Washington Post*. Massimo Introvigne, in his 2000 book *The Unification Church*, said that the *Post* had been "the most

anti-Unificationist paper in the United States."<sup>[4]</sup> In 2002, at an event held to celebrate the *Times's* 20th anniversary, Moon said: "*The Washington Times* is responsible to let the American people know about God" and "*The Washington Times* will become the instrument in spreading the truth about God to the world."<sup>[5]</sup>



The Washington Times bag.

The *Times* was founded the year after the *Washington Star*, the previous "second paper" of D.C., went out of business, after operating for over a hundred years. A large percentage of the staff came from the *Washington Star*. When the *Times* began, it was unusual among American broadsheets in publishing a full color front page, along with full color front pages in all its sections and color elements throughout. Although *USA Today* used color in the same way, it took several years for the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and others to do the same. The *Times* originally published its editorials and opinion columns in a physically separate Commentary section, rather than at the end of its front news section as is common practice in U.S. newspapers. It ran

television commercials highlighting this fact. Later, this practice was abandoned (except on Sundays, when many other newspapers, including the *Post*, also do it). *The Washington Times* also used ink that it advertised as being less likely to come off on the reader's hands than the *Post's*. This design and its editorial content attracted "real influence" in Washington. [6] When the *Times* began it had 125 reporters, 25 percent of them Unification Church members. [7] In 1982 the *Post* criticized the *Times* for killing critic Scott Sublett's negative review of the movie *Inchon*, which was also sponsored by the Unification Church. [8]

A former speechwriter for President George W. Bush, David Frum, in his 2000 book *How We Got Here: The '70s*, wrote that Moon had granted the *Times* editorial independence. [6] But some former employees, including the newspaper's first editor and publisher, James R. Whelan, have insisted that the paper was under Moon's control from the beginning. Whelan, whose contract guaranteed editorial autonomy, left the paper when the owners refused to renew the contract, asserting that "I have blood on my hands" for helping Moon acquire legitimacy. [9] Three years later, editorial page editor William P. Cheshire and four of his staff resigned, charging that, at the explicit direction of Sang Kook Han, a top official of the Unification Church, then-editor Arnaud de Borchgrave had stifled editorial criticism of political repression in South Korea. [10]

The *Times* was said to have been read every day by President Ronald Reagan during his terms in office.<sup>[11]</sup> In 1997 he said:

The American people know the truth. You, my friends at *The Washington Times*, have told it to them. It wasn't always the popular thing to do. But you were a loud and powerful voice. Like me, you arrived in Washington at the beginning of the most momentous decade of the century. Together, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work. And—oh, yes—we won the Cold War.<sup>[12]</sup>

The *Times* circulation has always been much less than that of the *Washington Post*. In 1992 the *New York Times* reported the *Times* had only one eighth the circulation of the *Post* (100,000 to 800,000) and that two thirds of its subscribers also subscribed to the *Post*.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1994 the *Times* introduced a weekly national edition, especially targeted to conservative readers nationwide.<sup>[14]</sup>

In 1997 the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (which is critical of United States and Israeli policies), praised the *Times* (along with *The Christian Science Monitor* owned by the Church of Christ, Scientist), and the *Times* sister publication *The Middle East Times* for what it called their objective and informative coverage of Islam and the Middle East, while criticizing the generally pro-Israel editorial policy of the *Times*. The *Report* suggested that these newspapers, being owned by churches, were less influenced by pro-Israel pressure groups in the United States.<sup>[15]</sup> In 1998 the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* wrote that

the Times editorial policy was "rabidly anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and pro-Israel." [16]

In 2002 the *Times* published a story accusing the National Educational Association (NEA), the largest teachers union in the United States, of teaching students that the policies of the U.S. government were partly to blame for the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.<sup>[17]</sup> This accusation was denied by the NEA and by liberal commentators.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

In 2002 *Post* veteran Ben Bradlee said, "I see them get some local stories that I think the *Post* doesn't have and should have had."<sup>[20]</sup> Dante Chinni wrote in the *Columbia Journalism Review*:

In addition to giving voice to stories that, as Pruden says, "others miss," the *Times* plays an important role in Washington's journalistic farm system. The paper has been a springboard for young reporters to jobs at *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, even the *Post*. Lorraine Woellert, who worked at the *Times* from 1992 to 1998, says her experience there allowed her to jump directly to her current job at *Business Week*. "I got a lot of opportunities very quickly. They appreciated and rewarded talent and, frankly, there was a lot of turnover."<sup>[21]</sup>

In his 2003 book, *Lies (And the Lying Liars Who Tell Them): A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*, comedian, author, and later Democratic senator Al Franken devoted a chapter to criticizing the *Times* after executive editor Wesley Pruden rewrote a reporter's story—without the reporter's knowledge—about Franken's performance at a White House party. According to Franken, the rewrite was made to appear as if Franken had received a negative reception, which he says was not the case.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 2004 the *Washington Post* reported dissension between some of the *Times* staff and ownership over the paper's stance on international issues, including support for the United Nations.<sup>[23]</sup>

In 2006 Max Blumenthal, writing in *The Nation*, reported that the Rev. Moon's youngest son Hyun-jin "Preston" Moon—who by this time had become president and CEO of parent company News World Communications—was in the process of ousting Coombs because of his racist editorializing. Blumenthal, quoting veteran *Times* news reporter George Archibald and others, reported that Coombs had made a number of racist and sexist comments, and was in the process of being sued by his colleagues for his remarks.<sup>[24]</sup>

As of 2007, home delivery of the paper in its local area was made in bright orange plastic bags, with the words "Brighter. Bolder. The Washington Times" and a slogan that changes. Two of the slogans are "The voice and choice of discerning readers" and "You're not getting it all without us."<sup>[25]</sup>

In January 2008, editor in chief Wesley Pruden retired and John F. Solomon began work as executive editor of the *Times*. Solomon is known for his work as an investigative journalist for the Associated Press and the *Washington Post*, and was most recently head of investigative reporting and mixed media development at the *Post*. [26][27][28] Within a month, the *Times* changed some of its style guide to conform more to what was becoming mainstream media usage. The *Times* announced that it would no longer use words like "illegal aliens" and "homosexual," and in most cases opt for "more neutral terminology" like "illegal immigrants" and "gay," respectively. The paper also decided to stop using "Hillary" when referring to Senator Hillary Clinton, and the word "marriage" in the expression "gay marriage" will no longer appear in quotes in the newspaper. These changes in policy drew criticism from some conservatives. [29] *Prospect* magazine attributed the *Times's* apparent move away from the far right to differences of opinion over the United Nations and North Korea, and said: "The Republican right may be losing its most devoted media ally." [30] Also that year, the Times stopped publishing a Saturday print edition.

In 2009 the Manila Times criticized the Washington Times for an editorial that it said interfered with the

political process in the Philippines,<sup>[31]</sup> while the *New York Times* criticized it for an editorial linking proposed health care reform in the United States to policies of Nazi Germany.<sup>[32][33]</sup>

On November 30, 2009 the *New York Times* reported that the *Washington Times* would no longer be receiving funds from the Unification Church and might have to cease publication or go to online publication only. [34] In December 2009 the *Times* announced it would lay off 40 percent of its 370 employees and stop subscription service, instead distributing the paper free in some areas of Washington including branches of the government. *The Times* said that it would focus on its "core strengths," which it identified as "exclusive reporting and in-depth national political coverage, enterprise and investigative reporting, geo-strategic and national security news and cultural coverage based on traditional values." A subscription website owned by the paper, theconservatives.com, continued, as did the *Times* three-hour radio program, "America's Morning News." [35] Later that month the *Times* announced that it would cease publication of its Sunday edition, along with other changes partly in order to end its reliance on subsidies from the Unification Church ownership. [36] On December 31, 2009, it announced that it would no longer be a full-service newspaper, eliminating its metropolitan-news and sports sections. [37][38]

In July 2010 international leaders of the Unification Church issued a letter protesting the direction the *Times* was taking and urging closer ties between it and the church.<sup>[39]</sup> In August 2010, a deal was made to sell the *Times* to a group more closely related to the church. Editor in chief Sam Dealey said that this was a welcome development among the *Times'* staff.<sup>[40]</sup> On November 2, 2010, the Rev. Moon and a group of former *Washington Times* editors purchased the paper from News World Communications for \$1. This ended a bitter feud within the Moon family that had been threatening to shut down the paper completely.<sup>[41]</sup> In March 2011 the *Times* announced that some former staffers would be rehired and that the paper would bring back its sports, metro, and life sections.<sup>[42]</sup> In June 2011, Ed Kelley, formerly of *The Oklahoman*, was hired as editor overseeing both news and opinion content.<sup>[43]</sup>

In March 2013 it was announced that Herring Broadcasting would join with the Washington Times to create a new cable news network that is projected to begin broadcasting in the summer of 2013; the new network would be called One America News.<sup>[44]</sup>

## **Funding**

The *Washington Times* has lost money every year that it has been in business. By 2002, the Unification Church had spent about \$1.7 billion subsidizing the *Times*.<sup>[45]</sup> In 2003, *The New Yorker* reported that a billion dollars had been spent since the paper's inception, as Moon himself had noted in a 1991 speech, "Literally nine hundred million to one billion dollars has been spent to activate and run the *Washington Times*".<sup>[46]</sup> In 2002, *Columbia Journalism Review* suggested Moon had spent nearly \$2 billion on the *Times*.<sup>[21]</sup> In 2008, Thomas F. Roeser of the *Chicago Daily Observer* mentioned competition from the *Times* as a factor moving the *Washington Post* to the right, and said that Moon had "announced he will spend as many future billions as is needed to keep the paper competitive."<sup>[47]</sup>

## **Political leanings**

The political views of *The Washington Times* are often described as extremely conservative. [48][49][50] *The Washington Post* reported: "the Times was established by Moon to combat communism and be a conservative alternative to what he perceived as the liberal bias of *The Washington Post*." [5]

Conservative commentator Paul Weyrich commented:

The Washington Post became very arrogant and they just decided that they would determine what was news and what wasn't news and they wouldn't cover a lot of things that went on. And the Washington Times has forced the Post to cover a lot of things that they wouldn't cover if the Times wasn't in existence.<sup>[51]</sup>

In 2007, the *Mother Jones* news magazine said that the *Times* had become "essential reading for political news junkies" soon after its founding, and quoted James Gavin, special assistant to Bo Hi Pak:

We're trying to combat communism and we're trying to uphold traditional Judeo-Christian values. The *Washington Times* is standing up for those values and fighting anything that would tear them down. Causa is doing the same thing, by explaining what the enemy is trying to do.<sup>[52]</sup>



In a 2008 essay published in *Harper's Magazine*, historian Thomas Frank linked the *Times* to the modern American conservative movement, saying:

There is even a daily newspaper—the *Washington Times*—published strictly for the movement's benefit, a propaganda sheet whose distortions are so obvious and so alien that it puts one in mind of those official party organs one encounters when traveling in authoritarian countries.<sup>[53]</sup>

In 2009 The New York Times reported:

With its conservative editorial bent, the paper also became a crucial training ground for many rising conservative journalists and a must-read for those in the movement. A veritable who's who of conservatives—Tony Blankley, Frank J. Gaffney Jr., Larry Kudlow, John Podhoretz and Tony Snow—has churned out copy for its pages.<sup>[34]</sup>

Though not listed, another conservative writer who trained there was *New York Times* op-ed columnist David Brooks, a *Washington Times* editorial writer in the 1980s.<sup>[54]</sup>

The *Times* has also been criticized for using the word "homosexual" rather than "gay."<sup>[55]</sup> In 2010, the *Times* published an editorial opposing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act because it granted legal protective status for transgender people. The editorial criticized some transgender people and said that gender identity can be a choice, not an innate characteristic.<sup>[56][57][58]</sup>

### **Notable writers**

#### Current

- George Archibald (Congressional, political, United Nations, and education reporter)
- Bill Gertz (Defense and foreign policy reporter)
- Donald Lambro (Political reporter)
- John McCaslin ("Inside the Beltway" columnist)
- James S. Robbins opinion columnist

- Frank Gaffney opinion columnist
- Lawrence Kudlow opinion columnist
- Jeffrey Kuhner opinion columnist
- Steve Bradley opinion columnist
- Ted Nugent opinion columnist
- Monica Crowley opinion columnist
- Ben Carson opinion columnist
- Tom Knott sports columnist
- Thom Loverro sports columnist
- Mark Kellner Technology
- Tom Knott D.C. metro columnist
- Fred Reed border-related topics
- Herbert London opinion columnist

#### **Former**

- David Brooks
- Samuel T. Francis (deceased)
- Jeremiah O'Leary (deceased)
- Rand Paul<sup>[59][60]</sup>
- Rob Redding (journalist and talk host)
- Bill Sammon
- Rowan Scarborough

## Executives, editors and managers, present and past

#### **Editors-in-chief**

- James R. Whelan (1982–1984)
- Smith Hempstone (1984–86)
- Arnaud de Borchgrave (1986–1992)
- Wesley Pruden (1992–2008)
- John F. Solomon (2008-2009)
- Sam Dealey (2010–2010)
- Ed Kelley (2011-2012)
- David S. Jackson (2012-2013)

#### **Managing editors**

■ Josette Sheeran Shiner (1992–1997)

## **Editorial page editors**

- Ann Crutcher (1984–1985)
- William P. Cheshire (1985–1987)
- Tony Snow (1987–1990)
- Tod Lindberg (1991–1998)
- Tony Blankley (2002–2007)
- Brett Decker (2009–2013)

■ David Keene (2014–present)

#### **Others**

■ Daniel Wattenberg—Arts and Entertainment editor

This literature-related list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The Washington Times&action=edit).

## See also

- Media in Washington, D.C.
- *Washington Times-Herald* Washington, DC newspaper founded in 1893 by William Randolph Hearst.
- Washington Times-Herald (Indiana) Washington, Indiana newspaper.

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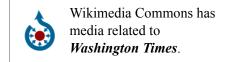
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## **Further reading**

■ Gorenfeld, John (2008). *Bad Moon Rising: How Reverend Moon Created the Washington Times, Seduced the Religious Right, and Built an American Kingdom*. Sausalito, California: Polipoint Press. ISBN 0979482232.

## **External links**

■ Official website (http://www.washingtontimes.com/)



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